

RṢYAŚRṆGA IN THE NARRATIVE ART OF JAINA STŪPAS
AT KĀNKĀLĪ-ṬĪLĀ

KĀMA AND TAPAS IN JAINA SCULPTURE:
PATRONS, ARTISTS, WORSHIPPERS

Narrative legends on stone reliefs in early Indian art from Bhārhut¹, Sāñcī² or Gandhāra³ can be easily viewed on the spot or after continuous series in museum buildings. In the case of Śuṅga and Kuṣāṇa sculpture from Mathurā, however, we have to piece together ancient fables mainly from the exhibits in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, and in the museum halls and store rooms, at Lucknow and Mathurā⁴. The find spots on our archaeological map⁵ are constantly being enriched⁶ by yearly acquisitions⁷ leading to new topographical information⁸. A preliminary survey on old sites of Mathurā includes Jaina, Buddhist and Brahmanical sites⁹. It is accomplished by systematic excavations, for example at Sonkh¹⁰ or by fortuitous finds near the Caurāsi temple¹¹.

1. A. CUNNINGHAM, *The stūpa of Bharhut*, London, 1879 (repr. Varanasi, 1962).

2. J. MARSHALL & A. FOUCHER, *The monuments of Sanchi*, Calcutta, 1940.

3. H. INGHOLT, *Gandhāran art in Pakistan*, New York, 1957. J. MARSHALL, *The Buddhist art of Gandhāra*, Cambridge, 1960. H. CH. ACKERMANN, *Narrative stone reliefs from Gandhāra in the Victoria & Albert Museum in London*, Rome, 1975. F. SEHRAI, *The Buddha story in Peshawar Museum*, Peshawar, 1978.

4. H. HÄRTEL & J. AUBOYER, *Indien und Südost-Asien*, Berlin, 1971, p. 57. *Jaina Art and Architecture*, New Delhi, I, 1974, p. 55.

5. J.-PH. VOGEL, *La sculpture de Mathurā*, Bruxelles, 1930, p. 16.

6. V. S. AGRAWALA, *A catalogue of the Brahmanical images in Mathurā art*, Lucknow, 1951. Id., *Mathura Museum Catalogue*, part III, «Jaina Tirthankaras» (Lucknow, 1952).

7. *Annual Report on the Working of the Archaeological Museum Mathura*, for the year ending 31 March 1949, Allahabad, 1951.

8. H. LÜDERS, *Mathurā inscriptions*, unpublished papers ed. by K. Janert, Göttingen, 1961, map 3.

9. N. P. JOSHI, *Mathura sculptures*, Mathura, 1966, pp. 75-8.

10. LÜDERS, *op. cit.*, map 3. JOSHI, *op. cit.*, p. 76, nr. 18. H. HÄRTEL, *Die Grabung am Hügel von Sonkh - Schlußbericht*, in «Jahrbuch Preußischer Kulturbesitz», XII (1974-75).

11. LÜDERS, *op. cit.*, map 2. K. FISCHER, *Hidden symbolism in stūpa railing reliefs: Coincidentia Oppositorum of Māra and Kāma*, in «The Stūpa: its religious, historical and architectural significance» (Wiesbaden, 1980), pl. V/1.

The edifices of these ancient Indian religious communities were embellished by sculptures without religion-wise difference¹². Nearly life-size Yakṣīs (fertility goddesses) and miniature-like *mithunas* (erotic couples), for instance, derive from age-old popular, pre-Jaina, pre-Buddhist and pre-Hindu tales and dramatic scenes of auspicious symbolism¹³. These folk-songs were orally transmitted and served sometimes as inspiration for sculptors; their reliefs could become a source for later literary traditions¹⁴. Propitious sculptures, including *mithunas*, were a part of a religious building¹⁵, and whilst these works of erotic art may have been enjoyed by visitors of this sanctuary, they constituted a part of its religious iconology and conveyed the same moral message as the figures of an ascetic Jina Tīrthaṅkara, Bodhisattva or Buddha or a god of the Hindu Pantheon did. Such considerations may help us to interpret a relief from Kaṅkāli-Ṭīlā (plate), nowadays at Lucknow, which, to my knowledge, has not yet been explained in all details¹⁶. I am thankful for comments to Proff. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, v. Mitterwallner, Bechert, Bollée, Bruhn, Filliozat and Roth during the preparation of this paper, the discussion at Strasbourg and the subsequent final redaction.

A *torāṇa*-pillar was carved on both sides, divided originally in three compartments, one above the other, separated by railings and *caitya*-arches¹⁷. Only the upper two compartments are left; Persepolitan pilasters frame ever two scenes on the front and back elevations. On top of the relief in the upper compartment of the back elevation a Brāhmī inscription¹⁸ reads:

1. *Namā ahaṃtānaṃ (!) śrāmaṇa śravikāye.*
2. <Ba> *lahastinīye toraṇaṃ pratiṣṭā[pi](taṃ).*
3. *sahā mātā pitihi sahā.*
4. *saśrū sasuraṇa.*

« Adoration to the Arhats! A *torāṇa* has been erected by order of Balahastinī, a lay pupil of the ascetics, together with her parents, together with her mother-in-law and her father-in-law ».

12. Jaina Art..., cit., p. 5.

13. J. HERTEL, *Der Ursprung des indischen Dramas und Epos*, in WZKM, 18 (1904), esp. 158-162. L. v. SCHROEDER, *Mysterium und Mimus im Rigveda*, Leipzig, 1908, p. 298.

14. M. WINTERITZ, *Geschichte der indischen Literatur*, Leipzig, II 1, 1913, p. 200.

15. VARĀHAMĪHIRA, *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, LVI, 14-15.

16. V. A. SMITH, *The Jain stūpa and other antiquities of Mathurā*, Allahabad, 1901, pl. XXVIII = our « plate »; fragment of *torāṇa* pillar: Front and Back Elevations. Jaina Art..., cit., pl. 11B: observe = SMITH, Back Elevation; reverse = SMITH, Front Elevation.

17. V. THEWALT, *Stützelemente und ihr Schmuck in der Architektur der Kuṣāṇa-Zeit*, « Bonner Diss. » (1982), abbs. 48, 133, 139, 165, 219.

18. H. LÜDERS, *Epigraphical notes*, in IA, 33 (1904), p. 153 sq., nr. 31. Id., *A list of Brāhmī inscriptions*, Benares, 1973, p. 70.

Front Elevation

Upper compartment: A standing pair in frontal view of a sturdy man and a slender lady to his left, clad in long *dhōṭī*, the woman bare-breasted according to the custom of the age¹⁹. The man in the shape of a Yakṣa²⁰, the female of a Yakṣī²¹ from Kuṣāṇa times. Between the two figures the head of another person, probably a female servant. To the right of the male figure a boy handing a vessel to the man, the latter offering with his right hand a cup to the lady²². Garlands between the standing couple.

Lower compartment: A similar couple seated on a bench, the man with both hands lifted to the sides of his mouth, the woman resting her head on her left hand in a manner of looking pensively at her counterpart. In the background two female heads.

Back Elevation

Upper compartment: In the midst of a forest a nude young woman sitting astride in the bifurcation of a tree holding on her lap an adolescent with one leg on each side of her²³ and clad only with a turban pierced by a horn on his forehead²⁴.

Lower compartment: A princely clad figure turning towards left and lifting his left arm with elbow in level with his eyes. Smaller assistant figures to both sides.

The first description of this pillar was supplied by V.A. Smith (note 16): «...each compartment contains the representation of a domestic scene... The attitude of the figures in the upper compartment of the back elevation of the inscribed pillar shown in plate XXVIII is indelicate. The principal figure in the lower compartment of the same pillar is evidently intended for a king or chief...». Recently the general character of Kuṣāṇa sculpture at Mathurā was described in the intro-

19. M. CHANDRA, *The history of Indian costume from the 1st century A.D. to the beginning of the 4th century*, in JISOA («Journal Indian Soc. Oriental Art»), 8 (1940), p. 203. CH. FABRI, *Indian dress*, New Delhi, 1977, pp. 3, 34, 56.

20. J. E. VAN LOHUIZEN-DE LEEUW, *The «Scythian» period*, Leiden, 1949, pl. 30.

21. B. ROWLAND, *The art and architecture of India. Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, Harmondsworth, 2. ed., 1956, pl. 48.

22. *Madhupāna* = C. SRIVARAMAMURTI, *Sanskrit literature and art, mirrors of Indian culture*, New Delhi, 1955, pp. 13-5.

23. VOGEL, *op. cit.*, p. 62, note 1, observed the similarity of this attitude with Bhūtesar, see below note 34.

24. Similarity with head-gear and horn in a sculpture from Caubārā: K. FISCHER, *Old Indian terracottas and contemporary art*, in «Roopa-Lekhā», 25 (1954), no. 1, pp. 35-6 and note 37. FISCHER, *Hidden Symbolism...*, cit., note 46.

duction to a compendium of Jaina art²⁵: « ... Yakṣīs, ... *apsarases*... appear everywhere, singly or in *mithunas*, and nothing in the austere tenets and practices of any religion could prevent their appearance in place of worship... at Mathurā in the remains and miniature representations of the Jaina *stūpas*, they are present ubiquitously. Nude Yakṣīs attend on a sculptured *stūpa*... and are seen in lascivious poses on railing-posts... ». Our relief from Kaṅkāli-Ṭilā (plate) is especially appreciated²⁶: « The subject-matter of the panels is mostly mundane, showing scenes of love, palace-life, drinking couple, man attending to the coiffure of a woman, woman decorating herself, dancing couple, and so on, but religious scenes depicting men and women carrying garlands and flowers are not entirely lacking... The treatment of these scenes is admirable. Untrammelled by religious conventions, the artist was at ease to display his skill in depicting men and women in various actions and in a wide variety of poses ».

The scene in the upper compartment of the back elevation (plate) was twice represented in enlarged drawings after Smith: by Thomas as « *Lata Veshtika* (!) Embrace »²⁷ (with a confusion of the embracing persons — the figure with turban and horn displaying female breasts) and by Upadhyaya (with the correct anatomy) in a kind of frontispiece to the chapter « About courtesans »²⁸.

We shall now try to understand the meaning of the fragmentary pillar with its 2×2 relief-fields (plate) by comparing them with similar other sculptured pillars from Kuṣāṇa-age Mathurā.

One type consists of the celebrated 4 railing pillars from Bhūtesar showing on the obverse from the bottom upwards a dwarfish *vāhana*, a Yakṣī and an amorous pair frequently in drinking scenes (see n. 22)²⁹. On the reverse we find scenes from well known legends narrated in 3 subsequent episodes. None of the complete architectural pieces contains an inscription³⁰. One pillar relates an event from the legendary biography of the Buddha = the pacification of the elephant Nālāgiri³¹. We read from the bottom upwards: 1) The furious animal killing inhabitants of Rājagṛha. 2) The tamed elephant kneeling in front of the Buddha. 3) The Buddha and worshippers. Three reverse sides illustrate *Jātakas* from the top downwards. In the *Valāhassa Jātaka*³² we observe 1) the arrival of the merchants in the city of the ogresses, 2) the Bodhisattva

25. *Jaina Art...*, cit., p. 5.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

27. P. THOMAS, *Kāma Kalpa or the Hindu ritual of love*, Bombay, 1960, pl. XIII, fig. 33.

28. *Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana*, compl. transl. ... by B. C. UPADHYAYA, Bombay, 1961, p. 196.

29. VOGEL, *op. cit.*, pl. XIX.

30. LÜDERS, *Mathurā...*, cit., p. 36, note 1.

31. VOGEL, *op. cit.*, pl. XXa.

32. *Ibid.*, pl. XXb.

as a flying white horse trying to save the merchants, 3) in the upper half ogresses taking merchants on their laps and making love with them by adopting the active part, whilst in the lower half gigantic heads of the witches devour their victims. In the *Sibi Jātaka*³³ the king 1) protects the pigeon and talks to the hawk and 2) offers his own flesh to be weighed on a balance; 3) (heavily destroyed), probably salvation of the king by Indra. In the *R̥ṣyaśṛṅga Jātaka*³⁴ follow 1) the arrival of the princess with the courtesans in a boat, 2) pretended penitence of the women with the innocent young R̥ṣyaśṛṅga with his horn piercing through the turban and 3) the seduction of the adolescent horned hermit to carnal love by a woman who stands astride on the earth and has taken him to her lap, whilst his legs hang down on her thighs.

In one case from Caubārā the obverse of a pillar seems to have been filled with a single figure recognized as R̥ṣyaśṛṅga in short *dhōṭī*, holding two fingers of the right hand in *vismayahasta* or *vitarka-mudrā* at his chin and covered by a turban under which his horn protrudes³⁵. On the reverse are again 3 panels³⁶. In the uppermost a tree is surrounded by a railing and worshipped by an old and a young man offering garlands and lotus flowers. On the lower rim of this panel a Brāhmī inscription³⁷ reads:

abhyam̐t[a]r[o] psthāyakasa Kaṭhikasa dānam

« The gift of Kaṭhika, the servant in the royal harem ».

The middle panel shows a seated man and another behind some indefinite object on which two birds are perched. The lower panel is nearly destroyed. I am unable to suggest whether the episodes should be read downwards or upwards.

In another type of architectural decoration only one single side is chiselled with narrative scenes (or known to be chiselled according to available information). A pillar from a temple at Caurāsi mound is

33. *Ibid.*, pl. XXc.

34. *Ibid.*, pl. XXd: « pas identifié ». V. S. AGRAWALA, *Handbook of the sculptures of the Curzon Museum of Archaeology Muttra*, Allahabad, 1939, p. 42: « ... stage of the story of R̥ṣyaśṛṅga ». FISCHER, *Old Indian terracottas...*, cit., pp. 34-5. D. SCHLINGLOFF, *Die Einhorn-Legende*, in « Christiana Albertina », 11 (1971), p. 60. J. W. EINHORN, *Spiritualis Unicornis*. « Das Einhorn als Bedeutungsträger in Literatur und Kunst des Mittelalters » (München, 1976), p. 34.

35. L. BACHHOFFER, *Die frühindische Plastik*, München, 1929, pl. 98. VOGEL, *op. cit.*, pl. XXIb. V. S. AGRAWALA & B. S. UPADHYAYA, *A relief of R̥ṣyaśṛṅga in the Mathurā Museum*, in JISOA, 4 (1936), pp. 62-4 & plate XI. J. N. BANERJEA, *The development of Hindu iconography*, Calcutta, 2. ed., 1956, p. 260 & pl. IV/3. FISCHER, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

36. BACHHOFFER, *op. cit.*, pl. 99.

37. LÜDERS, *op. cit.*, p. 56. See also the interpretation contrasting with that given by the authors quoted in our note 35 = G. BHATTACHARYA, *Wer waren die Auftraggeber der Werkstätten Mathuras?* Inschriftlicher Befund, in « Künstler und Werkstätten in den orientalischen Gesellschaften », hrsg. v. A. Gail (Graz, 1982), ann. 45-47.

devided in 8 compartments³⁸. In the lowermost appear a man and a boy carrying something on his head. The next 6 relief-fields show this man adoring in *añjali-mudrā* a young woman. In the 8th = the uppermost panel this man and another worship in *añjali-mudrā* the enthroned Buddha with his *abhaya-mudrā*³⁹. In comparison with Aśvaghoṣa's *Saundarānanda*⁴⁰ and the representation of this legend in early Indian art⁴¹ we recognize the transition from canto IV to canto V of this poem, i.e. Nanda dallying with Sundarī and Nanda-leaving-Sundarī and-following the Buddha.

The first part of this story, i.e. the love play between Nanda and Sundarī, found its place in 2 reliefs on one side of an architectural fragment from Gurgaon — in scenes which don't allow to realize a chronological order in the legend⁴². In the upper portion⁴³ Nanda attends to the coiffure of Sundarī who looks into a mirror in her right hand whilst an attendant figure presents to her a tablet with a head-dress; in the compartment below⁴⁴ the servant holds the mirror, Sundarī is decorating herself with a necklace and Nanda carries the tablet with the head-ornament.

Finally we know architectural pieces from railings with figural decorations of equally small size on both sides. Evidence of a Jaina sanctuary at Kaṅkāli-Ṭīlā begins already during the Śuṅga dynasty⁴⁵. In the museum at Mathurā is preserved the broken part of a corner railing pillar carved on two adjacent sides with amorous scenes. On one side⁴⁶ is shown a couple with badly damaged faces. The male has his right hand around the neck of the lady while with the left he is perhaps unloosing her girdle. On the other side⁴⁷ the lady is rendered carrying the male on her lap. This man holds a pot in his left hand while his right hand is around the female's neck. This love-scene between an active woman

38. K. D. BAJPAI, *New Buddhist finds from Mathura*, in «Lalit Kalā», 3-4 (1956-57), pls. XLVI/5, XLVII, XLVIII/10 & 14. FISCHER, *Hidden Symbolism...*, cit., pl. V/1.

39. K. FISCHER, *Erotik und Askese in Kult und Kunst der Inder*, Köln, 1979, bild 49.

40. Aśvaghoṣa: *The Saundarānanda or Nanda the fair*, transl. ... by E. H. JOHNSTON, London, 1932, pp. 20-30.

41. Fragment connected with the architectural remains of our plate: «Abstract from Dr. Fuhrer's article on Indo-Scythic architecture and sculpture of the Mathura School». The «Journal of Indian Art and Industry», 5 (1893), p. 58 and pl. 86 = SMITH, *op. cit.*, pl. XXVII. V. S. AGRAWALA, *Palace-Scenes on a Mathurā Pillar*, in JUPHS, XIX (1946), pp. 56-60 = ID., *Studies in Indian Art*, Varanasi, 1965, pp. 164-67. P. K. AGRAWALA, *Mithuna*, New Delhi, 1983, pls. 77, 78. See also D. SCHLINGLOFF, *Aśvaghoṣa's Saundarānanda in Ajanta*, in WZKM, 19 (1975), p. 94.

42. VOGEL, *op. cit.*, pl. XVIc. In the *Image of Man*, in «The Indian perception of the universe through 2000 years of painting and sculpture», catalogue (London, 1982), fig. 121.

43. FISCHER, *op. cit.*, bild 48.

44. HÄRTEL, *op. cit.*, farbt. V.

45. LÜDERS, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

46. *Annual Report...*, cit. (1949), p. 8 = register no. 3421.

47. *Ibid.*, pl. IIB.

and an unexperienced youth may have constituted the final act of a drama in 3 panels as known from Buddhist Bhūtesar and to be read from the top downwards to this sexual encounter of R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga (see above, note 34, nr. 3). The fracture of the stone in the level of the heads prevents us from recognizing whether the boy was rendered with turban and horn. The *torāṇa* pillar from Kuṣāṇa-age Kaṅkāli-Ṭilā (plate) belongs to this category of double-sided illustrated architecture (note 47) displaying the same erotic scene with a lady seducing a boy in her lap (note 34).

From 4 scenes on this fragmentary pillar (plate) 3 show women and men in various stages of love-play. Among these 3 reliefs at least one can safely be interpreted on the basis of erotic iconography (note 23): a strong female initiating a less strong boy into the art and practice of sexual union. The sculptural remains from the Kuṣāṇa-age in Buddhist Bhūtesar (note 34) and Jaina Kaṅkāli-Ṭilā (plate) are so well preserved that they let us recognize a horn on the forehead of the boy who was known as R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga « the hermit with the horn ». His story belongs to the above-mentioned (note 13) pre-Jaina and pre-Buddhist folk-tales on auspicious symbolism probably deriving from dramatic scenes serving for the spell of rain-making. The heroes became known as a hermit and his deer-horned son: after *Alambusā-Jātaka* (523) and *Nalinikā-Jātaka* (526) the Bodhisattva and Isisīṅga, in later Hindu literature Vibhandaka and R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga « the ṛṣi with the horn on the forehead ». The ascetic father has been induced by an *apsaras* to shed his sperma. A doe licked it up and gave birth to a boy with a horn. The father tried to bring up his son as an abstinent ṛṣi in the solitude of the forest and without knowledge of the female sex. But, in order to free the country from dryness, the adolescent was, in correspondence with age-old Oriental rain-and-water-fertility-magic to be allured by the princess and her companions on a land-route or by a boat to the royal residence and to be seduced to carnal love⁴⁸. The princess and her companions (or, in other versions: courtezans led by an old and experienced prostitute) searched for R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga and discovered him in the forest, in the hermitage of his father. They constructed by trees a floating hermitage on a boat and lured the innocent boy out of the wilderness to the artificial forest. On abduction followed seduction (plate), after the flow of the hermit's semen followed the flow of the life-giving rain. According to various literary traditions R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga can either be finally won to worldly life and stay together with the princess in the kingdom or return to ascetic

48. H. LÜDERS, *Die Sage von R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga*, in NGGW (1897); and *Zur Sage von R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅga*, in NGGW (1901); and in *Philologica Indica... Kleine... Schriften... Lüders... Festgabe...*, 1939..., Göttingen, 1940. W. HAUG, *Studien zur Geschichte und Vorgeschichte der Literatur des europäischen Mittelalters* (Ungedr.), « Münchener Habil.-Schr. » (1964), Kapitel B: Die Verführung R̥ṣyaśr̥ṅgas.

life into the forest⁴⁹. As long as we lack inscriptions and literary documents on the intentions of the patrons and artists (and on the intellectual reception of art works by the public) we have to leave open the question whether a *mithuna* group of this saint and a young woman on a Jaina *stūpa* conveyed an ascetic or erotic message.

Indian erotology frequently refers to the woman taking the ruling part during the love-play⁵⁰ and union in *puruṣāyita*⁵¹, but an intercourse of two seated partners with the female playing the active role occurs only rarely in Western⁵² and Eastern⁵³ sexual compendia and Indian art⁵⁴. Mathurā sculptors adopted it where the story requires the fact: when ogresses pretend love (note 32, nr. 3 = upper half) to males on their laps before devouring them, and when — according to the popular tradition or literary version — a princess or courtesan introduces Rṣyaśṛṅga into the ways of love: on a Śuṅga Jaina relief (note 47), in Buddhist Bhūtesar (note 34) or in our Kuṣāṇa sculpture (plate). The latter has an important artistic merit over the two other pieces: it describes vividly the scenery of the (true or imitated) forest where the seduction of the adolescent took place - who later on remembered longingly this event standing under or protected by a tree (note 35). In poetry (notes 48, 49) in the architectural decoration at Sāñci⁵⁵, in a schist-relief from Gandhāra⁵⁶ and in a Kuṣāṇa-period ivory from Beogram⁵⁷ the sylvan background of the hermitage with plants and animals round the hut of the old ascetic is lively pictured; at Kaṅkāli-Ṭīlā the anonymous artist has succeeded in placing the seduction-scene into the heart and charm of the Indian jungle.

We do not know whether in this image (plate) were reflected the ancient Indian tree-symbolism⁵⁸ and especially its connection with the

49. Well known examples of literary sources = W. D. O'FLAHERTY, *Asceticism and eroticism in the mythology of Śiva*, Oxford etc., 1973, New Delhi, 1975, p. 49. JAMPA LOSANG PANGLUNG, *Die Erzählstoffe des Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya analysiert auf Grund der tibetischen Übersetzung*, Tokyo, 1981, pp. 97-8 (Studia Philologica Buddhica. Monograph series III). Recently discovered Kuṣāṇa age stone fragments of the story at Govindnagar = R. C. SHARMA, *New Buddhist sculptures from Mathura (Pre-Gupta epoch)*, in « Lalit Kalā », 19 (1979), pl. XXXVIII/2.

50. THOMAS, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-61. FISCHER, *Old Indian...*, *cit.*, note 33.

51. A. COMFORT, *The Koka Shastra... and other medieval Indian writings on love*, London, 1964, p. 143, note 3. FISCHER, *Erotik und Askese...*, *cit.*, index, p. 288.

52. L. VAN DER WECK-ERLEN, *Das goldene Buch der Liebe oder Die Renaissance im Geschlechtsleben*, « Ein Eros-Kodex für beide Geschlechter » (Wien, 1907) (repr. Reinbek, 1978), p. 326, nr.; 107, 461-463; 352-357.

53. COMFORT, *op. cit.*, p. 139, note 4. See also S. LIENHARD, *Ratirahasya*, Schmiden, 1960, pp. 96-7.

54. UPADHYAYA, *op. cit.*, drawing after an Orissan temple, p. 223. K. LAL, *The cult of desire*, Delhi, 2. ed., 1968, pl. 64. G. TUCCI, *Rati-līlā*, München, 1969, upper photograph in folder of p. 89.

55. SCHLINGLOFF, *Die Einhorn...*, *cit.*, abb. 4.

56. *Id.*, *op. cit.*, abb. 3.

57. FISCHER, *op. cit.*, bild 4.

58. O. VIENNOT, *Le culte de l'arbre dans l'Inde ancienne*, Paris, 1954.

woman⁵⁹ or the idea of a tree as support and shelter for loving partners⁶⁰ as it is attested by early sculptures⁶¹ and later miniatures⁶², for example, of the *Gītagovinda*⁶³. Perhaps the Kuṣāṇa artist was familiar with the erotic performance of *vrkṣādhirūḍhaka* « climbing a tree »⁶⁴ as other stone-cutters depicted it⁶⁵, or with *latāveṣṭitaka*, the sweet « embrace of the creeper »⁶⁶ by which our plate has been described (notes 27, 28).

One may finally consider whether the relief (plate) indicates a firm and fixed place in the midst of the jungle with the Bodhisattva's or Vibhandaka's hermitage (notes 48, 49), or whether the erotic encounter in the bifurcation of a tree takes place on a « floating hermitage » — a kind of raft camouflaged by arbors and leaves as it is already rendered in early Indian art⁶⁷. About one millennium later the journey of the royal party on a boat to the forest of the ascetic father and his son and back to the residenec played a prominent role in the Bengali version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* with the *Ṛṣyaśṛṅga*-story⁶⁸ and its illustration in contemporary terracottas⁶⁹. Subsequently North Indian painters seem to have enjoyed themselves when describing in detail the hermitage amidst trees with the *ṛṣi* looking towards the courtezans from behind the trees, or rendering the artificial forest on the « floating hermitage »⁷⁰ offering an adequate home to the young hermit who is sometimes still to be seen on solid ground under a protective tree⁷¹.

At the present state of my knowledge I do not know how or whether to combine the *Ṛṣyaśṛṅga*-scene with the panel below it (plate). I can only repeat the observation by Smith (after note 16) that we see a prince

59. G. ROTH, *The woman and tree motif*, in JASB(L), 23 (1957).

60. COMFORT, *op. cit.*, p. 139: « When a couple stand up, leaning for support against a wall, a pillar or a tree (sthita-standing-positions) there are four modes of proceeding... ». WECK-ERLEN, *op. cit.*, p. 403, nr. 233 « Pfeiler ».

61. UPADHYAYA, *op. cit.*, pl. XXXI. FISCHER, *op. cit.*, bilder 37, 59, 62, 63 right.

62. UPADHYAYA, *ibid.*, pl. XVI left. FISCHER, *ibid.*, farbtafs. 15-19.

63. M. S. RANDHAWA, *Kangra paintings of the Gīta Govinda*, New Delhi, 1963, pls. V, VII, XIII, XV, XVII etc.

64. LIENHARD, *op. cit.*, p. 73. UPADHYAYA, *op. cit.*, p. 100. COMFORT, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

65. FISCHER, *op. cit.*, bilder 56, 61, 67.

66. LIENHARD, *op. cit.*, p. 73. UPADHYAYA, *op. cit.*, p. 100. COMFORT, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

67. SCHLINGLOFF, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-4.

68. FISCHER, *Old Indian terracottas...*, cit., pp. 37-8.

69. *Ibid.*, opp. p. 32. FISCHER, *Erotik und Askese...*, cit., bild 75.

70. O. C. GANGOLY, *A set of Rāmāyaṇa illustrations of the Pahārī School*, in « Bulletin of the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery », 9 (1952-53), pts. I-II, ills. 1-3. M. CHANDRA, *Paintings from an illustrated version of the Rāmāyaṇa painted at Udaipur in A.D. 1649*, in « Bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India », 5 (1955-57), p. 45, fol. 12.

71. FISCHER, *op. cit.*, bild 97.

or chief. The attitude of the central figure may be compared with that of royal persons on Āndhra-reliefs⁷² lifting their arms.

As in a Śuṅga architectural sculpture from Kankālī-Ṭīlā (notes 46, 47) the Kuṣāṇa artist has at this place depicted an amorous scene on the opposite side of the relief with the loving Ṛṣyaśṛṅga (plate). But in this panel the man is in his physiognomy and hair style quite different from Ṛṣyaśṛṅga with his turban and horn. The characterization of these panels on the front elevation by a recent work on Jaina art (after notes 16 and 26) as « ... mundane, scenes of love, palace-life, drinking couple ... » may tentatively be compared with fragments from Gurgaon illustrating the love-play between Sundarī and Nanda (notes 42-44). The hero and the heroine seem to have been depicted once more in the panel below — as in the reliefs of Gurgaon no chronological order seems possible: to read the event from the bottom upwards or vice versa (note 42). Although these two panels don't show scenes typical of Saundarānanda-illustrations (note 43), whilst they are referred to in the above-mentioned Jaina-volume (note 26) as « ... man attending to the coiffure of a woman, woman decorating herself... » (perhaps to be recognized in the lower panel where the young woman seems to play with her necklace?) the entire atmosphere of these two reliefs recalls Aśvaghōṣa⁷³:

9. The pair attracted each other mutually, with their eyes engaged solely in gazing at each other, with their minds intent solely on each other's conversation and with their body-paint rubbed off by their mutual embraces.

10. They sported and shone together as if challenging each other with the glory of their beauty, like a Kimpuruṣa and a Kinnarī standing by a mountain torrent in loving-devotion.

11. The pair brought ecstasy to each other with the increase of their mutual passion and in the intervals of exhaustion they sportively intoxicated each other by way of mutual refreshment.

12. Once he covered her with ornaments, not that she should be decorated, but simply in order to serve her; for she was so adorned by her beauty that she was rather the ornament of her ornaments.

If the scenes on the front elevation of the toraṇa pillar from Kankālī-Ṭīlā should be really understood as the love-sport of the pair in the beginning of Saundarānanda, they would have in common with the Ṛṣyaśṛṅga-episode of the back elevation (plate) one possible aspect of his story: his final return to asceticism (note 49). But unlike the young

72. P. R. RAMACHANDRA RAO, *The art of Nāgārjunikoṇḍa*, Madras, 1956, pls. XVI, XXV, XXXV. T. N. RAMACHANDRAN, *A Buddhist relief from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa*, in « A Miscellany of Papers published by the Rao Sahib G. V. Ramamurthi Pantulu's 70th Birthday Celebration Committee », ill. p. 106.

73. JOHNSTON, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

horned hermit who was transformed to a lover and who, after having fulfilled his task as rain-producer by love, could choose to stay in the world of love or to return to the solitude of the forest-hermitage, Nanda enjoyed in his youth the love of Sundarī but was destined to abandon her and to follow the way to asceticism. In his closing verses Aśvaghoṣa explains the transitory charms of love⁷⁴: 63: « This poem, dealing thus with the subject of salvation, has been written in the *Kāvya* style, not to give pleasure, but to further the attainment of tranquillity and with the intention of capturing hearers devoted to other things. For, that I have handled other subjects in it besides Salvation is in accordance with the laws of *Kāvya* poetry to make it palatable, as sweet is put into a bitter medicine to make it drinkable ».

Is it possible to find further connections between narrative literature, the iconography of sculptures rendered on architectural monuments and inscriptions on these buildings? In the early examples of Bhārhut we notice the two fundamental possibilities in the character of epigraphy: the inscriptions record the names, occupations or native city of the donors on different parts of the railing (pillar, railing-bar, coping); and we have a considerable number of inscriptions which are labels, or titles, of the sculptured scenes above which they are placed⁷⁵. It was already noted that in spite of the abundance of historical epigraphs of Mathurā a certain group of Kuṣāṇa railing-architecture with legendary relief-scenes contain no inscriptions (note 30). On the other hand we find in the Ānanda temple of Pagan inscriptional interpretations to stone sculpture with scenes from the legendary life of the Buddha in the interior of the building⁷⁶, and titles of the *Jātakas*, the earlier existences of the Buddha, in epigraphs on glazed tiles on the outer walls of the temple⁷⁷. Can in the Kuṣāṇa art of Mathurā a donor-inscription above or below a relief refer to the literary version of the latter or to the iconology of the whole pillar with its sculptural decoration on both sides?

When an attempt was made to connect the icon of a young man on a pillar from Caubārā with the content of the donor-inscription on the other side of this architectural piece (notes 35-37), we may ask ourselves whether the female donor of the Kaṅkālī-Ṭilā Ṛṣyaśṛṅga-relief (plate) who calls herself a lay pupil of the ascetics (note 18) had in her mind the ascetic, anti-erotic message of the Ṛṣyaśṛṅga-story? It must perhaps remain a matter of speculation, whether she ordered the depiction of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga's transitory erotic phase, or whether the artists used for the task « Ṛṣyaśṛṅga » the ready-made mithuna-iconography of the Mathurā

74. *Ibid.*, pp. 116-17.

75. CUNNINGHAM, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

76. K. SEIDENSTÜCKER, *Süd-buddhistische Studien I. Die Buddha-Legende in den Skulpturen des Ananda-Tempels zu Pagan*, Hamburg, 1916. TH. H. THOMANN, *Pagan. Ein Jahrtausend buddhistischer Tempelkunst*, Stuttgart, 1923, pp. 25-34.

77. A. GRUENWEDEL, *Buddhistische Studien I. Glasuren von Pagan*, Berlin, 1897. THOMANN, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-5.

ateliers (notes 34, 47) displaying the seduction of the young hermit as a central part of the ethical legend ⁷⁸.

A further consideration leads to the question whether Jaina monks and laymen viewing R̥ṣyaśṛṅga led by a princess or courtesan from his saintly life to erotic pleasures realized the ascetic meaning of the legend or enjoyed its sensuous representation, and whether they — as also Buddhists ⁷⁹ and Hindus — had always the same idea about the meaning of the sculpture: during the Kuṣāṇa epoch, during the period of the medieval temples, and finally in recent times.

Throughout all ages Jaina, Buddhist and Hindu religion, philosophy, narrative poetry and canonical texts oscillate between praise of and warning against women ⁸⁰. Voluptuous females and *mithunas* of conversing, drinking and loving pairs were after tenets of fertility-symbolism regarded as necessary and auspicious part of a holy building (notes 15, 29). At the same time enamoured couples and sexual scenes were to demonstrate the futility of worldly lust (notes 32, 38-44, 72). The relief of a female introducing a male into carnal pleasure (notes 34-36, plate) can on first sight signify a luck-bestowing *mithuna*, and will have been understood in this sense by the majority of voyeurs. Some people knowing old tales by mind or after literary versions may have remembered that the male partner in this *mithuna*, R̥ṣyaśṛṅga, owed his life to the seducement of his ascetic father, was brought up as a hermit, and had himself to be provoked to shed his semen in order to procure life-giving rain, and was afterwards free to choose between worldly or ascetic life. On various chronological levels of interpretation the sexual act between the woman and R̥ṣyaśṛṅga may be called a *mithuna*, or a challenge to the male partner to abstain from the state of being part of a *mithuna*.

From post-Kuṣāṇa narrative Jaina literature like the *Vasudeva-hiṇḍī* ⁸¹ or the poet Hemacandra ⁸² we know a story of Valkalacirin who, apart from being born without a horn on his forehead, has a fate similar to that of R̥ṣyaśṛṅga. During the life-time of Hemacandra two images of women in love were sculptured on the walls of Khajuraho: in both Hindu ⁸³ and Jaina ⁸⁴ temples they form part of *mithunas* and belong to the iconographic programme of fertility-symbolism, but on a Śiva temple this god teaches them in his Bhikṣāṭanamūrti the right balance between eroticism and ascetism ⁸⁵.

78. FISCHER, *Old Indian terracottas, cit.*, p. 35.

79. FISCHER, *Hidden symbolism..., cit.*, pp. 93-4 with notes 43, 44.

80. FISCHER, *Erotik und Askese..., cit.*, index pp. 282-83.

81. H. VON GLASENAPP, *Die Literaturen Indiens*, Stuttgart, 1961, p. 229.

82. « Versuchte Unschuld » = pp. 41-56 in « Der Prinz als Papagei », *Märchenhafte Berichte von wunderbaren Glücks- und Unglücksfällen zur Belehrung und Erbauung erzählt von indischen Jaina-Mönchen*, Weimar, 1976.

83. P. CHANDRA, *The Kaula-Kapalika cults at Khajuraho*, in « Lalit Kala », 1-2 (1955-56). H. GOETZ, *The historical background of the great temples at Khajuraho*, in « Arts Asiatiques », 5 (1958). V. PRAKASH, *Khajuraho*, Bombay, 1967, pp. 150-89.

In the canonical *Sūyagaḍa* I, 4, 2, 5-11 Jaina monks are warned against women asking them to paint their feet, to fetch food and drinks, to prepare cosmetics and to give them a mirror⁸⁶. These labours belong to the services which Nanda once offered to his beloved Sundarī, as described by the poet⁸⁷ and Kuṣāṇa sculptors from Mathurā (notes 42-44) and Gandhāra⁸⁸. In later literature and art the heroine urging her beloved to serve her in these manifold ways was known as the *ākṛānta-Nāyikā* « commanding the lover who is kept in obedience »⁸⁹ for example in the love-play between Rādhā and Lord Kṛṣṇa⁹⁰.

Summing up: 3 relief scenes of amorous pairs on a panel from the Jaina *stūpa* at Kankālī-Ṭilā (plate) are in literature and sculpture connected with earlier creations of Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina religion, philosophy and mythology. The couples on the Front Elevation can symbolize in a quite unsophisticated manner beauty, love, luck, fertility, prosperity in the tradition of *kāma* and *mithuna*. If one can prove that they represent Nanda and Sundarī they are a challenge to overcome *kāma* and to strive for another traditional Indian goal of life: *mokṣa*, to be attained by *tapas*, by renouncing on worldly lust. The erotic scene in the upper panel of the Back Elevation shows a central episode from the story of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga during which an ascetic is transformed into a lover in order to produce fertility for the whole country. According to various literary versions he can afterwards continue to procure welfare for the kingdom either by remaining the lover of the princess or by returning to his earlier ascetic⁹¹ life*.

84. *Jaina Art...*, cit., II, 1975, p. 286.

85. J. FILLIOZAT, *Les images d'un jeu de Siva à Khajuraho*, in « *Artibus Asiae* », 24, 1961.

86. *Worte Mahāvīrās. Kritische Übersetzung aus dem Kanon der Jaina* von W. SCHUBRING, Göttingen u. Leipzig, 1926, p. 148.

87. JOHNSTON, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-3.

88. JOSHI, *op. cit.*, p. 65, note 3. K. FISCHER, *Auftraggeber, Bildhauer und Verehrende von Mithuna-Gruppen in der mittelmeeerländischindischen Mischkunst*, in « *Künstler und Werkstätten in den orientalischen Gesellschaften* », hrsg. v. A. Gail (Graz, 1982), abbs. 9, 10.

89. SIVARAMAMURTI, *op. cit.*, p. 27. FISCHER, *Erotik und Askese...*, cit., index p. 279.

90. RANDHAWA, *op. cit.*, pls. XVII-XX.

91. This is explicitly depicted in a series of events in one of our examples from later Indian art (M. CHANDRA in our note 70): fol. 12 = Ṛṣyaśṛṅga being allured by courtezans; fol. 14 = Ṛṣyaśṛṅga's marriage; fol. 36 = Penance of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga. Recent illustrations of fol. 12 and fol. 36: K. FISCHER, *Did Hindus react to the depiction of Kāma and Tapas in sculpture and painting?* (Paper Conference « *The Destiny of Man* », during the Exhibition « *In the Image of Man* », London, 1982, in the press).

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